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# People's Participation in the Local Administration in the Philippines

—An Empirical Study on the Local Development Council—

Kenichi NISHIMURA\*

## Abstract

Local Government Code of 1991 provides the Local Development Council (LDC) to promote people's participation in the process of development planning at local governments in the Philippines. However, LDC had been said not to be functioning properly during 1990s and early 2000s to realize people's participation in policy process although more and more Local Government Units (LGUs) had started to enact it. Therefore, we conducted an elite survey entitled "2011 Local Government Survey in the Philippines" in 2011 and 2012 to see the extent of diffusion and the state of functions of LDC in the Philippines. We found out through the survey that most of LDCs function to discharge their basic mission – formulation of development plans and investment programs. The score of performance of each local government, however, is different from one to another. Therefore, we explore the elements which influence the functions and performance of LDCs. We will see the relations between the mayors' attributes and the functions of LDCs, and the factors which can improve the performance of LDCs.

[Keywords] Local Development Council, Local Government Code of 1991, local governance, people's participation, Philippines

## 1 Introduction

Thirty years have passed since President Marcos was ousted by "People Power" in 1986. An important feature of this post Marcos era is that civil society in the Philippines was given legal basis to enhance its participation into policy process in national and local level. As Buendia points out, 1987 Constitution stands out in enhancing people's political rights through several provisions for direct people's participation (Buendia 2005: 85–89).

According Buendia, the constitution has at least thirty-one provisions which are related with people's participation (ibid., 88). Most importantly, the

constitution has Section 23 of Article II as a general clause which gives a mandate to the national government to "encourage non-governmental, community-based, or sectoral organizations that promote the welfare of the nation". Article XIII of the constitution demands that the "state shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms" to prevent "the right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making" from being abridged (Section 16), also "state shall respect the role of independent people's organizations to enable the people to pursue and protect, within the democratic framework, their

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legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means” (Section 15). And Section 14 of Article X encourages participation of NGOs to local governance for the purpose of decentralization. It says that “President shall provide for regional development councils or other similar bodies composed of local government officials, regional heads of departments and other government offices, and representatives from non-governmental organizations within the regions for purposes of administrative decentralization to strengthen the autonomy of the units therein and to accelerate the economic and social growth and development of the units in the region”.

Based on the constitution, Local Government Code 1991 (LGC 1991) has several provisions related with NGO and People’s Organizations (POs). Chapter IV of LGC 1991 provides promotion of NGO and POs (Section 34), cooperation with them (Section 35), and assistance to them (Section 36). And LGC 1991 provides several institutions (local special bodies) to make participation of NGOs and POs into the process of decision making, policy implementation and monitoring of local governance. The list of these institutions includes Local Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee (Section 37), Local School Boards (from Section 98 to Section 101), Local Health Boards (from Section 102 to Section 105), Local Development Council (from Section 106 to Section 115), and Local Peace and Order Council (Section 116).

Among these institutions, Local Development Council (LDC) is the pivotal one in terms of the function for local development and the width of range of sector for which NGOs represent. Considering the importance of LDC, therefore, we will see how LDCs are operated in the LGUs and how they contribute to the improvement in the performance of LGUs in the Philippines.

## 2 Data

The data we use in this paper is acquired by the survey entitled “2011 Local Government Survey in

the Philippines” (The principal investigator was Fumio Nagai, Osaka City University). The population was 1,515 local governments in 16 regions in 78 provinces. Out of all the 1,591 governments in 17 regions in 80 provinces, we excluded 76 governments in 2 provinces in Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) due to their political instability. The population consists of 135 cities and 1,380 municipalities; 771 governments in Luzon, 336 in Visayas, and 408 in Mindanao. And we used a representative sample of 300 local governments randomly selected in 16 regions, 71 provinces. It consists of 93 cities and 207 municipalities; 170 governments in Luzon, 67 in Visayas, and 63 in Mindanao.

In our survey we interviewed a mayor and a municipal/city planning and development coordinator (C/MPDC) at each local government. We designed a questionnaire for mayors and that for coordinators respectively. Social Weather Stations (SWS) undertook interviews and most interviews were conducted face-to-face excepting very few cases. We had 300 respondents (100% response rates) from both mayors and C/MPDCs.

## 3 Issues and Problems Related with Local Development Council in its Early Years

There have been pointed out several problems regarding LDC since it was provided in the LGC 1991. This chapter describes these issues.

### 3-1 Inactiveness of LDC

Garganera examines the state of LDCs after ten years since promulgation of LGC and reveals 75% of LDCs are inactive (Garganera 2004). Brillantes Jr., looking back over a decade of development of decentralization, also points out that “many local special bodies have not been convening regularly.” (Brillantes 2003: 16) This critical view is shared by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) which is the main agency to monitor and regulate the local governments. In the occasion

of the 5th National CBMS Conference held in 2008, Manuel Q. Gotis, then the director of the Bureau of Local Government Development of DILG, stated that LDCs are inactive and this is one of the factors behind the poor local planning in the Philippines (Gotis 2008).

### **3-2 Underrepresentation of NGO**

The Philippines had 81 provinces, 145 cities, 1,489 municipalities, and 42,036 barangays in the Philippines as of December 31, 2015. Based on the numbers of local governments in the layer of province as well as city / municipality, Buendia calculates the number of seats for the representatives from NGOs around 16,000 (Buendia 2005: 257). The actual seats of the representatives of NGOs, however, had fallen short of the calculation during 1990s. Buendia points out that NGO representatives secured only 729 seats (less than five percent of the expected number of seats) to the local special bodies as of 1992, and 4,635 seats (about 30% of the expected number of seats) as of 1997 (Buendia 2005: 214-216).

### **3-3 Intervention by the Local Government in the process of the accreditation of the NGO Representatives**

There are some issues related to the accreditation of NGO representatives by LGUs in the background of the problems mentioned above (Brillantes 2003: 29). In some LGUs, DILG officials take crucial roles to call NGOs for accreditation. In other case, however, DILG officials leave whole process of election of NGO representatives to local officials. There are some local assemblies (Sanggunian) who are deeply involved in the process of accreditation. The offices which take a leading role of accreditation are also varied – secretariat of Sanggunian in some cases, provincial office of development and planning coordination in other cases. Some LGUs allow total autonomy of NGOs to elect their own representatives. There are LGUs which accredit all applicant NGOs while some LGUs neglect applications.

This kind of variety of accreditation process

shows a certain level of autonomy of LGUs (Brillantes 2003: 29). In the environment where patron-client political culture is prevailing like the Philippines, however, these autonomous local governmental processes may open ways to the control of participatory process by local government (Bunte 2011). And this can lead local participatory governance to stalemate.

Against the background stated above, this paper will examine how LDCs are operated in the LGUs in the Philippines.

## **4 State of Local Development Council (Distributions of Data from the Survey)**

As we see in previous chapter, it has been criticized that LDCs don't actually function enough or even don't exist at all. Thus we will investigate in this chapter whether LDC are organized and functioning to discharge its basic mission. Then we will explore the extent of NGOs' participation in LDCs.

### **4-1 Basic Function of LDC**

In this section, we will explore 1) whether LDC discharge their basic mission such as formulating "development plans and policies" as well as "public investment programs", 2) whether LDC holds its general assembly regularly in accordance with the law, and 3) whether LDC provides occasion to its members including NGO representatives to propose their idea of projects and policies related to the development of their community.

#### **4-1-1 Formulation of Development Plans and Investment Programs**

Development planning is one of the most important mandates which LGU should cope with, because any ordered and comprehensive social and economic developments of local community are realized through active coordination taken by LGU. Section 106 of LGC 1991 gives mandate to LGUs to formulate multi-sectoral comprehensive development plan. And Section 109 provides the functions of provincial, city, and municipal development councils

as follows:

- (1) Formulate long-term, medium-term, and annual socioeconomic development plans and policies;
- (2) Formulate the medium-term and annual public investment programs;
- (3) Appraise and prioritize socioeconomic development programs and projects;
- (4) Formulate local investment incentives to promote the inflow and direction of private investment capital;
- (5) Coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of development programs and projects; and
- (6) Perform such other functions as may be provided by law or competent authority.

Provisions mentioned above in minds, we asked C/MPDC if the LDC of his/her LGU formulates the comprehensive development plans (annual, medium, long term) and the public investment programs (annual and medium term).

The results are shown in tables below. From Table 1 to Table 3 show the state of development plan formulation, and Table 4 and Table 5 show the state of the formulation of investment programs.

**Table 1 Annual Development Plan**

	Frequency	%
Formulate	291	97.0
Not formulate	9	3.0
Total	300	100.0

**Table 2 Medium-Term Development Plan**

	Frequency	%
Formulate	273	91.0
Not formulate	27	9.0
Total	300	100.0

**Table 3 Long-Term Development Plan**

	Frequency	%
Formulate	253	84.3
Not formulate	47	15.7
Total	300	100.0

**Table 4 Annual Investment Program**

	Frequency	%
Formulate	287	95.7
Not formulate	13	4.3
Total	300	100.0

**Table 5 Medium Term Investment Program**

	Frequency	%
Formulate	247	82.3
Not formulate	53	17.7
Total	300	100.0

We can see, from these tables, that more than 90% of LDCs formulate annual and medium-term development plans as well as annual investment program. On the other hand, at least 80% of LDCs formulate long-term development plan and medium-term investment program. These results tell us that most LDCs have capacity more or less to formulate development plans and investment programs.

#### 4-1-2 Operation of LDC

As we saw in the previous chapter, one of the main issues on LDC is its inactiveness. Accordingly, we investigate if LDCs operate their general assemblies in accordance with LGC 1991. Section 110 of LGC 1991 provides that “the local development council shall meet at least once every six (6) months or as often as may be necessary”. With this provision in minds, we asked C/MPDC how many times his/her LDC hold general assembly in a year (Table 6).

**Table 6 Frequency of General Assembly in a Year**

	Frequency	%
1.00	70	23.3
2.00	124	41.3
3.00	106	35.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 6 shows us that all LDCs hold general assembly at least once in a year and 230 (76.7%) of all LDCs hold general assembly more than twice a year. It means most LGUs abide by the law. And a striking fact is that a considerable number of LDCs

(106 or 35.3%) hold general assembly three times a year, in addition to the number of assembly designated by law.

And then we asked C/MPDC whether LGU obtain any ideas of projects from the members of LDC during the general assembly. Considering that LDC is an institution which realizes participatory local governance, we assume that general assembly is functioning as an occasion for NGOs and other members to propose their aspirations and idea of projects to local government. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 LGU Obtain Ideas of Projects from Members during General Assembly

	Frequency	%
YES	292	97.3
NO	8	2.7
Total	300	100.0

As Table 7 shows us, most of LDC functions as occasions for the members to propose their ideas of projects to local government. Then we also asked in which sector the members propose ideas of projects. We showed the list of sectors of 1) agriculture / fishery, 2) health, 3) environment, 4) social welfare, 5) infrastructure development, 6) public market, 7) transportation, 8) housing, 9) education, 10) peace & order, 11) livelihood projects. The results are put in Table 8.

Table 8 Frequency of Project Proposal by Sector (N=300, Multiple Response Allowed)

	Frequency	%
Infrastructure Development	277	92.3
Environment	264	88.0
Social Welfare	253	84.3
Agriculture & Fishery	248	82.7
Livelihood Projects	236	78.7
Health	232	77.3
Education	230	76.7
Peace & Order	216	72.0
Public Market	189	63.0
Transportation	182	60.7
Housing	159	53.0

We can say, based on the results which Table 1 to Table 8 indicate, most LGU more or less make basic functions of LDC work or they try to obey the law by setting LDC and holding general assembly in accordance with related provisions of LGC 1991.

#### 4-2 Extent of People's Participation in LDC

As we discussed in chapter 1, most important feature of the Post-Marcos regime is people's participation in policy process have gained enhanced legal basis. The legal system in the Philippines, as a whole, has mechanisms to protect people's political rights through containing provisions which promote concrete participation of NGOs, POs and private sector in the process of decision making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. LDC is one of the most important institutions for people's participation in the policy process of local governments. We will investigate in this section, therefore, the extent of involvement of NGOs in the organization of LDC.

First, we will see how many percent do NGO representatives occupy the seat of LDC. Section 107 (b) of LGC 1991 provides the composition of city / municipal development council as follows:

- (1) All Punong Barangays in the city or municipality;
- (2) The chairman of the committee on appropriations of the Sangguniang Panlungsod or Sangguniang bayan concerned;
- (3) The congressman or his representative; and
- (4) Representatives of non-governmental organizations operating in the city or municipality, as the case may be, who shall constitute not less than one-fourth (1/4) of the members of the fully organized council.

Considering Sec 107 (b) (4) which provides the number of the representatives of NGOs, we asked C/MPDC how many members, including representatives of NGOs, the LDC has. If a LGU follows the law, LDC of such LGU should have the representatives of non-governmental organizations not less than one-fourth of the total members of the council.

The result is shown in Table 9. Number of LDCs

which have NGO representatives not less than one-fourth of the total members of the council is 83 (27.7%) in population (300). Table 9 tells us that most LDCs don't abide the provision of the law regarding the ratio of representatives of the NGOs.

Table 9 NGO Occupation Ratio

	Frequency	%
Less than one fourth	202	67.3
More than one fourth	83	27.7
Don't know / Outlier	15	5.0
Total	300	100.0

Second, we will explore the composition of the executive committee of LDC. LGC 1991 provides executive committee should be organized within LDC to represent LDC and act in its behalf when it is not in session, because LDC shall hold general assembly just twice in a year in accordance with the law. Section 111 of LGC 1991 says about the function of the executive committee as follows:

(b) The executive committee shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (1) Ensure that the decision of the council are faithfully carried out and implemented;
- (2) Act on matters requiring immediate attention or action by the council;
- (3) Formulate policies, plans, and programs based on the general principles laid down by the council; and
- (4) Act on other matters that may be authorized by the council.

The provisions listed under (b) of Section 111 indicate that the executive committee has a crucial role to formulate development plans and projects, and to make a smooth policy implementation. And then Section 111 provides the composition of executive committee in each level of local governments from the province to barangay as follows:

- (1) The executive committee of the provincial development council shall be composed of the governor as chairman, the representative of component city and municipal mayors to be chosen from among themselves, the chairman of

the committee on appropriations of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, the president of the provincial league of Barangays, and a representative of nongovernmental organizations that are represented in the council, as members;

(2) The executive committee of the city or municipal development council shall be composed of the mayor as chairman, the chairman of the committee on appropriations of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, the president of the city or municipal league of Barangays, and a representative of nongovernmental organizations that are represented in the council, as members; and

(3) The executive committee of the Barangay development council shall be composed of the Punong Barangay as chairman, a representative of the Sangguniang Barangay to be chosen from among its members, and a representative of nongovernmental organizations that are represented in the council, as members.

These provisions require at least one representative from NGOs should be a member of the executive committee. Considering this requirement, therefore, we asked C/MPDC whether the executive committee of the LDC under the jurisdiction of his/her LGU has extra-members from NGOs in addition to the members designated by law. If LGU is favorable for the participation of NGOs in the LDC, LDC may organize its executive committee with extra-members from NGOs. Table 10 shows the results.

Table 10 Extra-Member from NGOs

	Frequency	%
No Extra-member	172	57.3
Have Extra-member	128	42.7
Total	300	100.0

The results tell us that there are a considerable number of LDCs (128) which have extra-members from NGOs although they do not compose as majority of LDCs.

And then we will compare the average of NGO occupation ratio in general assembly between the LDCs which have extra-members from NGOs and

the LDCs which don't have such members. The assumption here is if a LDC has more representatives from NGOs as the members of general assembly, such LDC has an executive committee with extra-members from NGOs. For examination of this assumption, we utilize the analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11 NGO Ratio in LDC and Composition of Executive Committee

NGO ratio

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.051	1	.051	4.128	.043
Within Groups	3.601	291	.012		
Total	3.653	292			

As Table 11 shows, there is a statistically significant correlation between the LDCs which have relatively large number of representatives from NGOs and the LDCs which have executive committee with the extra-members from NGOs at the  $p < .05$  level [ $F(1, 291) = 4.13$ ,  $p = 0.043$ ]. It means if a LDC has more NGO representatives, its executive committee also has more NGO representatives.

Then we will examine the selection procedure of the representatives from NGOs. Section 108 of LGC 1991 stipulates that "within a period of sixty (60) days from the start of organization of local development councils, the nongovernmental organizations shall choose from among themselves their representatives to said councils" and that "the local Sanggunian concerned shall accredit nongovernmental organizations subject to such criteria as may be provided by law". There are principles, at the background of this provision, that NGOs and POs shall be given their utmost possible autonomy because they are the representatives of common local residents. Therefore, we can assume that a LGU which complies with the law faithfully would allow NGOs to select their representatives only by themselves without intervention by mayor especially. In fact, Brillantes found out LGUs which "encouraged the NGOs themselves to constitute such "pre-accredita-

tion" bodies, if only to make sure that the NGOs who would be accredited would have been acceptable to the NGO community themselves" (Brillantes 2003: 29).

Considering the principle of the provision of the section mentioned above, we asked C/MPDC who attends the selection of the representatives from NGOs / POs providing the list of actors such as "mayor", "DILG local office", "city / municipal administrator", "planning officer", "other LGU offices", and "Sanggunian members". The results are indicated in the tables from 12 to 17.

Table 12 Attendance of DILG Local Office

	Frequency	%
Attending	270	90.0
Not Attending	25	8.3
No Response	5	1.7
Total	300	100.0

Table 13 Attendance of Mayor

	Frequency	%
Attending	276	92.9
Not Attending	17	5.7
No Response	7	2.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 14 Attendance of Administrator

	Frequency	%
Attending	177	59.0
Not Attending	103	34.3
No Response	20	6.7
Total	300	100.0

Table 15 Attendance of Planning Office

	Frequency	%
Attending	284	94.7
Not Attending	12	4.0
No Response	4	1.3
Total	300	100.0



Table 16 Attendance of Other LGU Offices

	Frequency	%
Attending	231	77.0
Not Attending	52	17.3
No Response	17	5.7
Total	300	100.0

Table 17 Attendance of Sanggunian

	Frequency	%
Attending	268	89.3
Not Attending	22	7.3
No Response	10	3.3
Total	300	100.0

Except for the administrator (attendance rate: 59.0%) and LGU offices other than the planning office (attendance rate: 77.0%), in almost all LGUs, DILG office (attendance rate: 90.0%), mayor (attendance rate: 92.9%), planning office (attendance rate: 94.7%), and Sanggunian (local assembly) (attendance rate: 89.3%) attend the selection of the representatives from NGOs. It is expectable that DILG office, planning office, and Sanggunian attend the selection of NGOs representatives. DILG office, as a supervising agent of LDC, would attend the selection. As to the planning office, it is mandated by LGC 1991 to take a role of the secretariat (Section 113). And according to the LGC 1991, Sanggunian “shall accredit nongovernmental organizations subject to such criteria as may be provided by law” (Section 108). In other words, these three offices are mandated to commit the procedural matter to organize LDC.

In the case of mayor, however, the law does not say anything about his/her involvement into the clerical matter such as LDC organizing process including selection of the representative from NGOs. Therefore, it is necessary to explain about mayor’s high attendance rate to the selection of the representatives from NGOs.

One possible reason is that there is some cautiousness on the side of local government. A planning and development coordinator from one LGU in Western Visayas told to the author that the

purpose to involve NGOs is to make them neutral politically (interviewed on Sept. 8, 2010). Considering the history of development of NGO movement in the Philippines when some NGOs engaged into advocacy taking the position of anti-government especially during Marcos presidency, it is expected that governments have such kind of cautiousness against NGOs.

Another reason is, for the mayors, taking a closer look at activities of NGOs makes policy formulation and implementation smoother. A mayor from Western Visayas once told to the author that the mayor, living there long time, knows well who among NGOs have been conducting projects cordially and who are organized just to get subsidy from government (interviewed on Sept. 5, 2010). For a mayor, competency and reliability of NGO matter much when LGU select representatives from a circle of NGOs. In another word, distrust against NGO may instigate mayors to attend the selection of the representatives from NGOs.

As we observed so far, there are certain reasons on the side of mayors to attend the selection process of NGOs. This behavior of mayor however can be taken by NGOs as unreasonable monitoring and pressure from mayor who is a politically most influential person of local government. These concerns were also shared by DILG during the early years of implementation of LDC. A study on LDC by DILG found that the “Local Chief Executive determines which NGOs are invited to participate, which amounts to political interference, and causes a lack of transparency in accreditation” (DILG 2001). This is closely connected to the another concern which is that a mayor, through exertion of his/her political influence and pressure to select NGO representatives, may control the process of formulation of development plans and public investment programs to realize his/her or his/her close allies’ own interests rather than the wide range of public interests.

## 5 Relations between the State of LDC and the Performance of LGU

In the previous chapter, we explored the actual state of LDC such as its function, implementation of general assembly, composition of LDC and its executive committee, and situation of the selection process of the representatives from NGO. We will examine in this chapter the relations between the state of LDC and the performance of LGU in the Philippines. For this purpose, we utilize the data which are taken from Local Governance Performance Management System (LGPMS) developed by the DILG as dependent variables (performance indices of each local government).

LGPMS is the performance indicator based on the self-appraisal by the LGUs and it has five performance areas – (1) Administrative Governance, (2) Social Governance, (3) Economic Governance, (4) Environmental Governance, and (5) Valuing Fundamentals of Governance – and seventeen service items as well as three value indicating items – a) Local Legislation, b) Development Planning, c)

Revenue Generation, d) Resource Allocation & Utilization, e) Customer Service, Civil Applications, f) Human Resource Management & Development (all as indices of Administrative Governance), g) Health Services, h) Support to Education Services, i) Support to Housing & Basic Utilities, j) Peace, Security & Disaster Risk Management (all as indices of Social Governance), k) Support to Agricultural Sector, l) Support to Fishery Services, m) Entrepreneurship, Business & Industry Promotion (all as indices of Economic Governance), n) Forest Ecosystems Management, o) Freshwater Ecosystems Management, p) Coastal Marine Ecosystems Management, q) Urban Ecosystems Management (all as indices of Environmental Governance), r) Participation, s) Transparency, t) Financial Accountability (all as indices of Valuing Fundamentals of Governance). All performance indices are shown with five-point scale; point 5 being the highest performance and 1 being the lowest. In this paper, we utilize the data in year 2011. Table 18 shows the descriptive statistics of dependent variables which are taken from LGPMS 2011.

Table 18 Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variable (from LGPMS 2011)

	Frequency	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Local Legislation	300	1.33	5.00	3.86	.741
Development Planning	300	2.04	5.00	4.57	.511
Revenue Generation	300	1.63	5.00	3.78	.690
Resource Allocation and Utilization	300	1.00	5.00	3.54	.815
Customer Service - Civil Applications	300	3.10	5.00	4.68	.363
Human Resource Management & Development	300	1.80	5.00	4.75	.549
Health Services	300	2.97	5.00	4.71	.363
Support to Education Services	300	2.00	5.00	4.49	.575
Support to Housing & Basic Utilities	300	1.00	5.00	4.05	1.299
Peace, Security & Disaster Risk Management	300	2.60	5.00	4.39	.460
Support to Agriculture Sector	277	1.42	5.00	4.24	.687
Support to Fishery Services	161	1.00	5.00	3.97	.868
Entrepreneurship, Business & Industry Promotion	300	1.58	5.00	4.07	.738
Forest Ecosystems Management	201	1.00	5.00	4.75	.713
Freshwater Ecosystems Management	250	1.00	5.00	4.53	.995
Coastal Marine Ecosystems Management	162	1.00	5.00	4.84	.549
Urban Ecosystems Management	300	1.48	5.00	4.01	.655
Participation	300	2.00	5.00	4.33	.635
Transparency	300	1.27	5.00	4.58	.584
Financial Accountability	300	2.99	5.00	4.63	.317

### 5-1 Frequency of General Assembly and Performance of LGUs

First, we will analyze the relationship between the frequency of general assembly of LDC and the performance of LGUs. The hypothesis here is that the more frequent holding general assembly, the higher LGU's performance tend to be.

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict LGU's performance based on the frequency of general assembly (F of GA), city/municipality difference (C/M), the level of income class of each LGU (Income), island groups (island groups 1 & island groups 2), mayor's orientation of governance (Efficiency/Participation), mayor's occupational background (Business/Non-business), mayor's style of governance (NPM/Non-NPM)<sup>1)</sup>, and mayor's familial background (Political/Non-political)<sup>2)</sup>. We put the independent variables such as "C/M", "Income", "island groups 1", "island groups 2", "Efficiency/Participation", "Business/Non-business", "NPM/Non-NPM", and "Political/Non-political" to see if there are effects from these variables rather than the frequency of general assembly ("F of GA"). "F of GA" is measured in frequency, "C/M" is coded as city = 1, municipality = 0, "Income" is coded as income class 1 and above = 1, income class 2 and below = 0, "island groups 1" is coded as Visayas = 1, others = 0, "island groups 2" is coded as Mindanao = 1, others = 0, "Efficiency/Participation" is coded as Participation = 1, Efficiency = 0, "Business/Non-business" is coded as Business = 1, Non-business = 0, "NPM/Non-NPM" is coded as NPM = 1, Non-NPM = 0, and "Political/Non-political" is coded Political = 1, Non-political = 0.

As to the performance on "Development Planning", a significant regression equation was found ( $F(9, 290) = 5.025, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .135. LGU's predictable performance on "Development Planning" is equal to  $4.332 + .063 (F \text{ of GA}) + .303 (C/M) + .182 (\text{Income})$ . LGU's performance score on "Development Planning" increases .063 point when frequency of general assembly increases once, performance score of cities is .303 point higher than that of municipalities, and performance score of

LGUs with income class 1 and above is .182 higher than that of LGUs with income class 2 and below. Therefore, frequency of general assembly, besides city/municipality difference as well as income class, is effective to improve LGU's performance on "Development Planning".

And then regarding the performance on "Resource Allocation, Utilization", a significant regression equation was found ( $F(9, 290) = 8.479, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .208. LGU's predictable performance on "Resource Allocation, Utilization" is equal to  $3.094 + .128 (F \text{ of GA}) + .518 (C/M) + .396 (\text{Income}) - .228 (\text{island groups 1}) - .263 (\text{island groups 2})$ . LGU's performance score on "Resource Allocation, Utilization" increases .128 point when frequency of general assembly increases once, performance score of cities is .518 point higher than that of municipalities, and performance score of LGUs with income class 1 and above is .396 higher than that of LGUs with income class 2 and below. On the other hand, performance score of a LGU is .228 point lower when such LGU is from Visayas, and .263 point lower if such LGU is from Mindanao. Therefore, frequency of general assembly, besides city/municipality difference as well as income class, is effective to improve LGU's performance on "Resource Allocation, Utilization".

### 5-2 NGO Occupancy Ratio and Performance of LGUs

Second, we will analyze the relationship between the occupancy ratio of NGO representatives in LDC and the performance of LGUs. The hypothesis here is that the higher the occupancy ratio of NGO in LDC, the higher LGU's performance tend to be. There is a principle at the background of this hypothesis that participatory governance improves the performance of local governments.

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict LGU's performance based on the NGO occupancy ratio in LDC (NGO Ratio), frequency of general assembly (F of GA), city/municipality difference (C/M), the level of income class of each LGU (Income), island groups (island groups 1 & island

groups 2), mayor's orientation of governance (Efficiency/Participation), mayor's occupational background (Business/Non-business), mayor's style of governance (NPM/Non-NPM), and mayor's familial background (Political/Non-political). We did not, however, find any significant relationships between the NGO occupancy ratio in LDC and the performance of LGUs.

### 5-3 Mayor's Presence at the NGO Selection and Performance of LGUs

Third, we will analyze the relationship between the mayor's presence at the selection of NGO representatives in LDC and the performance of LGUs. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict LGU's performance based on the mayor's presence at the selection of NGO representatives in LDC (Mayor Presence), city/municipality difference (C/M), the level of income class of each LGU (Income), island groups (island groups 1 & island groups 2), mayor's orientation of governance (Efficiency/Participation), mayor's occupational background (Business/Non-business), mayor's style of governance (NPM/Non-NPM), and mayor's familial background (Political/Non-political).

As to the performance on "Development Planning", a significant regression equation was found ( $F(9, 283) = 5.028, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .138. LGU's predictable performance on "Development Planning" is equal to  $4.199 + .297 (\text{Mayor Presence}) + .307 (\text{C/M}) + .155 (\text{Income})$ . LGU's performance score on "Development Planning" increases .297 point in LGUs where mayors attend the selection of representatives from NGOs, performance score of cities is .307 point higher than that of municipalities, and performance score of LGUs with income class 1 and above is .155 higher than that of LGUs with income class 2 and below. In other performance areas we could not see any significant differences between LGUs where mayors attend the selection of representatives from NGOs and the ones where there is no presence of mayors at selection of NGO representatives.

## 6 Concluding Remarks

LDC was established as an ace institution to realize efficient and participatory development planning at local governments in the Philippines. It has been however criticized for its inactiveness, prolonged accreditation process of NGOs, and unreasonable intervention by mayor into the selection process of the NGO representatives. These negative perceptions on LDC in minds, we have examined in this paper the state of LDCs after two decades of their establishment.

We found out through analysis several points regarding LDC. First, we found that most (around 80 to 90%) of LDCs function to discharge their basic mission – formulation of development plans and public investment programs. Second, large majority of LDCs (76.7% of them) holds their general assembly regularly in accordance with law (twice a year). Third, almost all LDCs (97.3% of them) provide occasion to their members including NGO representatives to propose their idea of projects and policies related to the development of their community. Given these findings, we can state that operating LDC is already common practice among LGUs in the Philippines after two decades of promulgation of LGC 1991.

With regards to the expected role of LDC as an institution to promote people's participation in the development planning, there are other some findings. First, most LDCs don't abide the provision of the law regarding the ratio of representatives of the NOGs (not less than 25% of full LDC members). Only 83 (27.7%) LDCs meet the criteria. Second, there are a considerable number of LDCs which have extra-members of the executive committee from NGOs although they do not compose as majority of LDCs (128 (42.7%) LDCs have extra-members from NGO). And if a LDC has more NGO representatives, its executive committee also has more NGO representatives. Third, in almost all LGUs, mayors show their presence at the selection process of the representatives from NGOs (attendance rate: 92.9%). Even though there are some reasons behind this, mayor's

presence gives certain political pressure to NGOs and there may be a controlling effect on the development planning.

Finally, we examined the relations between the state of LDC and the performance of LGU in the Philippines. We investigated three relations: 1) frequency of general assembly of LDC and the performance of LGUs, 2) occupancy ratio of NGO representatives in LDC and the performance of LGUs, 3) mayor's presence at the selection of NGO representatives in LDC and the performance of LGUs. Hypotheses are the more active and open to NGOs LDC is, the higher LGU's performances tend to be. The results show us an ambiguous situation. As we expected, the more frequency of general assembly of LDC, the higher LGU's performances in the areas of "Development Planning" and "Resource Allocation, Utilization" which are the main jobs of LDC.

However, the results also tell us that the level of NGO participation does not have significant effects to improve performance of LDC. This result may be related to some features and competence of NGOs. Firstly, NGOs and POs usually pursue their individual projects and pay little attention to the whole picture of development planning. Secondly, some NGOs and POs may not have enough capacity to discharge the assigned duty to them to formulate development plans and public investment programs. Then mayor's presence at the selection of the representatives from NGOs improves the performance of LGUs in the area of "Development Planning". One of the possible explanations on this result is that the mayors who attend NGO selection process have been established relatively strong and productive network with NGOs therefore their presence at the selection process does not necessarily mean they are trying to control NGOs.

Unlike the widely shared belief about LDC in the Philippines, our investigation revealed that LDCs had become common practice among LGUs after two decades of promulgation of the LGC 1991. We henceforth should explore factors of LDC which can improve the performance of LGU. In this paper we

only could examine a few points of LDC which affect the performance of LGUs. These results of course don't explain the all dimensions of importance of LDC for local developmental governance. We still have to go through holistic analysis to understand the significance of LDC for the local governance in the Philippines.

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### Notes

- 1) "NPM" indicates mayors who take New Public Management style of governance.
- 2) "Political" indicates a mayor who has at least one family member of second degree of consanguinity who is a politician concurrently with the mayor.

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